In regard to the canal from Changanachery to Alleppey, I understand that the work is not so formidable as it was once thought to be. The matter is being examined by the Department of Public Works. As regards the road from Quilon to Alleppey, you are not right in saying that Government are not devoting any attention to it. Every year, a large amount is being set apart for the road. Last year a sum of Rs. 40,000 was spent over it. The Tiruvalla-Ambalapuzha road is only a branch road and it is not as important as the main road from Quilon to Alleppey. We are completing the main road section by section, and, when it is completed, branch roads like the Tiruvalla-Ambalapuzha road will have their turn.

Agricultural loans are mainly intended for the poor, and if the poor do not take advantage of them, the blame does not lie with the Government. Out of the one lakh of rupees ear-marked for these loans last year Rs. 96,000 were actually advanced. Applications from the poor will certainly be preferred to those from the rich. The latter can command money in the open market, while the former cannot. I have no faith in agricultural banks. These banks have proved a failure wherever they have been tried. Co-operative Societies ought to be the appropriate agency for the poor to obtain these loans. I shall have the matter examined by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

As regards lectures and exhibitions, we had a Public Lecture Committee which we had to abolish, because it did not do much work. The question as to how to organise useful public lectures is engaging the attention of Government. As for agricultural exhibitions, Government will be glad to give financial help to private exhibitions. We are providing money for such help in the budget every year, and we have been giving a grant to the Ochira exhibition whenever it is held. Demonstration is also being done on ryots' lands by the Agricultural Department. As I have already said, I have asked the Director of Agriculture to prepare a scheme whereby the general public will be attracted to the agricultural farms on occasions of harvest. The people will take their own produce to the farms on such occasions and prizes will be awarded for the best exhibits. It is hoped that the scheme, when adopted, would popularise the farms and the improved methods introduced in them. As matters stand, it is regrettable to note that these farms, which are established and maintained by Government at great expense, are visited by very few people.

In regard to canoes, those under one ton capacity are exempt from the operation of the Public Canals and Public Ferries Regulation.

Member.—Bigger canoes used for agricultural purposes also require to be exempted.

Dewan.—It is difficult to distinguish between canoes used for *bona fide* agricultural purposes and those plying for hire. So we have exempted all canoes below one ton capacity.

Member.—There is also one other point, *viz.*, the supply of *Era* grass and shrubs for bunds.

Dewan.—That is a matter of detail.

52. Aids to the agriculturists of Kuttanad.

Mr. Ouseph Joseph Kunju (Member, Changanachery Taluk) made a few preliminary observations on the need for making Travancore self-sufficient in the matter of paddy production. He said that, if full advantage was taken of Kuttanad, a good deal more of paddy could be produced from Kuttanad alone. He then proceeded to describe the physical features of Kuttanad and explained how that tract of land was composed of parts of the Ambalapuzha, Changanachery, Kottayam, Tiruvalla and Kartikapalli taluks. The people living in Kuttanad and in the adjoining taluks had no identity of interests in any way and all their grievance

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was that Government had not spent a single pie on behalf of the agricultural population of Kuttanad, though the representatives of each of the taluks above mentioned had in a way ventilated their wants. In the opinion of the Member their interests would be best served by taking portions from each of those five taluks and creating a separate taluk with the privilege of returning a member for the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and the Legislative Council. Kuttanad would continue to be a neglected piece of land until it was converted into a separate taluk.

Under the Irrigation Regulation certain duties were cast on the revenue officers in respect of cultivation in Kuttanad, but the manner in which those officers were evincing their interest in the affairs of the Kuttanad ryots was such that they were sunk in litigation which ruined them and which did not permit of the whole of the available land being put under the plough. The country was a loser in that way, as the expected increase of paddy was not being produced. The main reason for such a state of affairs was the want of co-operation, cordiality and unity among the ryots in putting up bunds, in draining water from their fields and in so many other matters requiring co-ordination of efforts. The result was a regular crop of cases—civil and criminal—and the inevitable consequence of large areas of paddy lands being left uncultivated. The only remedy was the formation of Agricultural Panchayats of the ryots on an elective basis.

The Member also prayed for the construction of a *thodu* from Alleppey to Changanachery and for the restoration of the Chalakkal *thodu* and Kuttipuzha *thodu*. Lastly, the Member pleaded for larger funds being allotted for distribution as agricultural loans to the ryots of Kuttanad.

Dewan's reply.—I do not mean to deny that you have difficulties. But you have made a wholesale condemnation of officers, which is hardly proper. As I have already said to another member, it would be a very good thing if you can get on without officers, but they are a necessary evil.

I have passed through Kuttanad more than once, and I know its conditions. It is not necessary for me to get to every spot in Kuttanad to understand it.

In regard to the establishment of Agricultural Panchayats, I have already given a reply. The law has been revised. I have asked the Land Revenue Commissioner to hold a meeting of the people of Kuttanad and consult them and frame and submit rules to Government.

In regard to agricultural loans, I do not see why poor people should not derive any benefit out of them. If any Tahsildar neglects his duty in this matter, it may be brought to the notice of the Land Revenue Commissioner and the Government. Tahsildars are expected to do their duty properly in this matter, both as regards the rich and as regards the poor. We have allotted a large sum for agricultural loans, and, if that is not sufficient, we shall give more. We want to push on with agricultural loans.

53. Grant of some relief to Ezhavas in connection with industrial occupations.

Mr. K. P. Martandan Vaidyan (Member, Nominated) first dwelt upon the disabilities under which the Ezhava community laboured in respect of public service and education. They had no adequate representation in the public service, nor did they enjoy full privileges in the matter of admission to the Sanskrit and Ayurveda colleges. It was also regrettable that their community was not represented either in the Co-operative Department or in the Economic Development Board. The Member then pointed out the difficulties which the manufacturers of coir had to face as a result of the machinations of middle men who knocked off all the profits of the industry. The only remedy for that evil was the creation of Co-operative Societies among those engaged in the coir industry and for that purpose he suggested the appointment of some Inspectors in the Co-operative Department from the Ezhava community and also the nomination of a few members of that community as Honorary Assistant Registrars. The Member said that he was not quite sure whether it was proper to form Co-operative Societies on a communal basis, but, if it was so, he requested Government to encourage the formation of Co-operative Societies among

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